



**City Attorney's Office
City of Burbank**

Dennis A. Barlow, City Attorney

Memorandum

Date: October 15, 2010

To: Bonnie Teaford, Public Works Director
Sustainable Burbank Task Force Members

From: Dennis A. Barlow, City Attorney
By: Mary F. Riley, Senior Assistant City Attorney *mfr*

Subject: Community Outreach Event ("Meet and Greet") discussion item and the Brown Act

One item on Monday's agenda is to discuss whether or not a community outreach event will be held. This memo sets forth the minimum requirements under the Brown Act of any community outreach event.

Since this community outreach event will be hosted by a majority of the Task Force Members, it is considered a meeting under the Brown Act. The Brown Act defines a meeting to be "any congregation of a majority of the members...at the same time and place, to hear, discuss or deliberate upon any item" within its subject matter jurisdiction. (Gov. Code Sec. 54952.2).¹ This means that an agenda needs to be created and posted 72 hours before the meeting/event. The agenda will also need to provide for an opportunity for oral communications. A description of the format of the meeting/event should also be described on the agenda. Other than that, nothing else needs to go on the agenda, assuming that no action will be taken by the Task Force that evening.

How the meeting/event is conducted is completely up to the Task Force Members. You can hold a town hall type meeting (with the public addressing the body) or create a

¹Sometimes a community gathering could be characterized as a social occasion or a workshop open to the public. However, in those situations, the Brown Act prohibits a majority of a body from discussing among themselves business of a specific nature that is within their subject matter jurisdiction. Similarly, meetings organized to address a topic of local community concern will fall outside the definition of a Brown Act meeting only when that meeting is organized by an organization other than the city.

completely new model, such as separate tables/areas for each subcommittee; a casual open house; etc.

What you do need to confirm on Monday though is the intent of the meeting. If it solely is to educate or meet the public, then no formal actions will be taken by the Task Force. However, if the Task Force desires to take any action that evening, then that needs to be discussed in advance. A majority of the task force can deliberate in public and make decisions at a noticed meeting as long as the agenda gives the public notice of those proposed actions. If any decisions are intended to be made, please discuss that on Monday, so that the agenda can be drafted accurately.

I would suggest the Chair say a few words at the beginning of the meeting to explain the chosen meeting model and the purpose of the meeting, and to explain when oral communications will occur. Other than that, the rest of the meeting can flow in whatever direction the Task Force desires. If there are any Brown Act questions raised by the Task Force at Monday's meeting, I would be happy to respond to them in a supplemental memo.